



# MARIN COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION *NEWSLETTER*

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## President's Message

*by Marta Osterloh, President 1996*

I am honored to be addressing you as this year's President of the Marin County Bar Association. I am the first public sector lawyer to serve our Association as president and thus perhaps I bring a different perspective to the job.

Let me introduce myself to those of you I do not know.

My practice has been in the Public Defender's Office for twenty years this April. My clients are the indigent of our community, most of whom have their roots here and call Marin County home, but more and more of whom are transient or have otherwise loosened the ties of family and friends which humans rely upon for support.

The changes I have seen in the criminal justice system since 1976 are not different from what you all have seen: a huge growth in the demands on our courts and a dwindling of available services and safety nets for many in need of such support.

Over the years I have learned that when a litigant feels s/he has fully participated in the process of the courts and in the community it has the happy result of inspiring responsibility to our system of laws and to the community. I have had clients go off to do their prison time happily because they had a full hearing, were treated with respect and were given the opportunity to be heard. The end result paled in comparison with the experience of the process by which that result was reached. In this I am constantly reminded of the words of Justice Louis Burke at the investiture of Judge Ernie Zunino: the appearance of justice is just as important as justice itself.

In this new year our focus will be drawn to our community - not just our legal community, but our place as lawyers in the greater communities of which we are parts. The question will be: how can we best serve our community? We will be asked by the State Bar for our opinions as to whether a unified bar has value in serving our legal profession and in serving the public to whom we provide our services. In Marin, we will be asked to assist our bench as they move in May to implement a new system of case assignment intended to relieve some of the pressures of increasing

demand. I hope we will continue to wrestle with the issues of community raised by the trial of OJ Simpson and the differences in perception of our system of laws brought home to us by the radically divergent public reaction to that trial and its verdict. We will be confronted with the impact of the Three Strikes law as it puts more and more pressure on our court system, our prison system and our public resources. Hopefully, these opportunities will cause us to address the issue of community and what we are doing to create a climate in which all of us live lives invested in the community, its processes and its laws.

Our strength as lawyers is our training. Our respect for the law is in larger measure our concern for the society in which we live. The new year presents new challenges and new opportunities for participation in our community.

I send all of you New Year's greetings and wishes for a productive, prosperous and happy 1996.

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## LEGAL TECHNOLOGY SECTION 1996 KICKOFF MEETING



The Legal Technology Section plans to have a very exciting 1996. The Section will be putting its own Home Page on the Internet. Also, there are plans to have programs on technology in the law office for MCBA members and the business community. A kickoff meeting has been scheduled for February 1, 1996 at 5:30 pm at Island Graphics's offices.

The address is: Wood Island, 80 East Sir Francis Drake Blvd., Suite 2B. If you plan to attend please telephone Ted Lindberg at (415) 383-4783, or better yet, send an RSVP to [tlindberg@aol.com](mailto:tlindberg@aol.com).